

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. The following comments address all stated grounds for rejection and place the presently pending claims in condition for allowance.

Objection to Drawings

The drawings are objected to because of minor informalities. In the foregoing amendments to the drawings, Applicants amend Figs. 1, 5, 11 and 12, as suggested by the Examiner. In particular, Figs. 11 and 12 are designated as "Prior Art." Applicants also amend the Specification to remove reference character 66 that is not depicted in the drawings. In light of the amendments to the drawings and the Specification, Applicants request the Examiner to withdraw the objection to the drawings.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. patent No. 6,699,613 ("Inoue"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Applicants note that the Inoue reference was filed on May 2, 2001. Applicants also note that the Japanese priority application of the pending application was filed on February 14, 2001, which is earlier than the effective filing date of the Inoue reference. Applicants submit a verified English translation of the Japanese priority application to rely upon the earlier filing date of the Japanese priority application and thus antedate the Inoue reference. By relying upon the earlier filing date of the Japanese priority application, Applicants submit that the Inoue reference is antedated and not qualified for a reference to reject claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). Applicants therefore request the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) and pass the claims to allowance.

Application No.: 10/073696
Group Art Unit: 1746

Docket No.: SIW-032

CONCLUSION

In view of the above arguments, applicants believe that the pending application is in condition for allowance. Applicants believe no fee is due with this statement. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. SIW-032 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

By


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Attachments

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figs 1, 5, 11 and 12. These sheets, which include Figs. 1, 3-5, 11 and 12, replace the original sheets including Figs. 1, 3-5, 11 and 12.

Attachment: Replacement sheets